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Wong Thought CIA Paid Far East Fare

By Charles Memminger
Star-Bulletin Writer

Sunlin "Sunny" Wong, still on the witness stand after 1½ days of testimony, said yesterday he went on at least one trip to the Far East which he thought was paid by the CIA.

Federal Public Defender Michael Levine hopes to prove to the jury through his cross-examination of Wong, who was president of Bishop, Baldwin, Rewald, Dillingham & Wong, that the CIA directed and supervised the expenditure of some company funds.

That could clear Ronald Rewald of charges that he deliberately defrauded investors of millions of dollars.

But Levine is limited by a number of secret pretrial rulings by U.S. Judge Harold Fong on how far he can delve into CIA matters. Fong said he will only allow testimony concerning CIA management and supervision of Bishop, Baldwin funds.

Fong sharply warned Levine several times yesterday to stay within the boundaries set in the pretrial proceedings. Those boundaries were established to protect matters of national security while allowing relevant CIA evidence to come out in the trial.

THE GOVERNMENT contends the CIA's only involvement in the company was to pay telephone and telex bills for a "front company" Rewald agreed to man.

Under the arrangement, Rewald, Wong, or a Bishop, Baldwin secretary would handle calls coming in on a special phone

line to H&H Enterprises. That fake company provided a cover for CIA agents operating overseas.

The government contends Rewald exploited that involvement to bilk investors out of millions of dollars.

Wong said on direct examination that the only calls he knew that came in on the CIA phones were "wrong numbers."

Levine yesterday was able to introduce evidence during Wong's questioning that the former president met several people he believed were CIA agents and even traveled overseas on what he thought was a CIA mission.

In 1980, Rewald and Wong wrote a letter to then-CIA station chief Jack Rardin about a trip to the Far East in which they met with a CIA agent. That letter was introduced into evidence but the names of the country and CIA agent were blacked out.

WONG AND Rewald said in the letter that the agent was "excited" about the prospects of using Bishop, Baldwin "for various cover operations."

When asked by Levine who he thought paid for the trip, Wong replied, "As far as I know, the CIA."

Wong, however, said he did not know if any Bishop, Baldwin funds were spent on the trip.

Levine also questioned Wong about his attempt to find office space in Honolulu for another man introduced to him by Rewald as a CIA agent.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John

Peyton argued that testimony about that incident was outside the boundaries set by the judge. But Levine said the matter concerned Bishop, Baldwin money because Wong was on salary with the company when he tried to find the man an office.

Referring to the man only as "John Doe 7," according to the judge's order, Wong said he took the man to several locations looking for an office "in a building that had a lot of foot traffic."

HE WAS unsuccessful in finding an office the man liked, so let one of his real-estate associates take over the task.

During questioning by Peyton, Wong said, he first had little to do with BBRD&W, even though he was listed as company president.

But in 1981, when the real-estate market slumped, Wong said he closed his real-estate firm and asked Rewald if he could work full time. By 1983 he was making more than \$100,000 a year running Rewald's sporting goods offices, opening foreign Bishop, Baldwin offices and assessing possible investments for the company.

He said, however, that no investments were actually made in any of the projects he reviewed.

The government contends that instead of putting investors' money into legitimate investments, Rewald used the money in an elaborate Ponzi scheme to finance an extravagant lifestyle.

Wong was to continue his testimony today.

John Doe
Mr. [REDACTED] claims to be a resident of [REDACTED] Hawaii. However, he has indicated that he hasn't been here in several years and apparently expects to spend at least the next four to six years in [REDACTED] Far East Loc. 5

He was very familiar with our company and excited about the prospects of possibly using us for various cover operations in the near future, in addition to the possibility of exploring contacts we have in various other regions.

DEAR JACK—A letter dated Sept. 12, 1980, from Ronald Rewald and Sunlin Wong to then-Hawaii CIA station chief Jack Rardin said a Far East CIA agent was interested in using their investment firm as cover for spying operations.